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STATINTL

Fulbright Says West Has No Policy On 'Most Dangerous' Crisis in Iraq

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Staff Reporter

Senator J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) yesterday declared that the West has no agreed policy on the Iraq crisis as both he and Director Allen W. Dulles of the Central Intelligence Agency called the situation there "the most dangerous" confronting the United States today.

Fulbright, who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, also said there was no agreement among Iraq's neighbors although they are vitally affected by the Communist bid for power in Iraq and are "very nervous" over what is happening.

The question of what the West should do has been undecided for many reasons, partly as the result of old disagreements between the United States and Great Britain over Middle Eastern policy and partly as a result of the policies and resulting distrust of Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Another reason for the difficulties facing Western policy makers is that Premier Abdel Karim Kassem apparently is eager to resist pressure from communism and from Cairo-inspired Arab nationalism.

Dulles reported to the Foreign Relations Committee in a 2-hour closed session devoted to Iraq, Tibet and related questions.

Fulbright said that Dulles described the situation in Iraq as "extremely serious . . . but not hopeless." Fulbright said the intelligence chief believed that the Communists have come "mighty close to a takeover" but that "the point of no return" has not been reached.

According to Fulbright, Dulles said that while there are many Communists in high office in Baghdad Kassem himself is not a Communist and would like to find a middle position.

On leaving the meeting, Dulles told reporters he had previously suggested that one

of the Kremlin's purposes in "raising the Berlin issue at this acute stage may be to direct attention away from Iraq."

"One difficulty at the moment," Fulbright said, "is that Nasser's role vis-a-vis Russia is still equivocal. We are not sure how far the break (between Cairo and Moscow) has gone and how far we can rely on Nasser."

Dulles confirmed the stories about Kurds being shipped to Iraq from Russia, the Foreign Relations Committee said. One shipment contained several hundred Communist "activists," Fulbright said.

Fulbright pointed out that the Iraqi Kurds are concentrated in northern Iraq near the Iranian border. If the Communists succeeded in taking over Iraq, the Senator said, they may try to create a bridgehead across Iran, connecting Iraq and the Soviet Union.

The situation is dangerous for all of Iraq's neighbors, Fulbright said. "The independence of Iran is certainly threatened, and so is Saudi Arabia," he added.

Asked why there had been no firm policy established with respect to the Communist penetration in Iraq, the Senator said he did not want to revive his criticism of United States Middle Eastern policy at this time.

"There is still some hope," he said. "If the free countries can agree on a policy in this area."